

Appendix C: Further Explanation of the Downs and Black Bias Assessment Tool

The Downs and Black scale is made of 27 questions divided in to sub-sections:

1. **Reporting:** Assess whether the information provided allows for an unbiased assessment of the study outcomes. Consists of nine items all scored from 0 to 1 except for the question on listing confounding variables which scored from 0 to 2 contributing a maximum of ten points to the final score.
2. **External Validity:** Examines whether the findings of the study can be generalized to the intended population. Consists of three items all scored from 0 to 1 contributing a maximum of three points to the final score.
3. **Internal Validity:**
 - a. **Bias:** Examines the presence of any bias in the measurements of the intervention and outcome. Consists of seven items all scored from 0 to 1 contributing a maximum of seven points to the final score.
 - b. **Confounding:** Asses the bias of studies in the selection of study participants. Consists of six items all scored from 0 to 1 contributing a maximum of six points to the final score.
4. **Power:** Examines the possibility that the study findings could be due to chance. Consists of one item and is scored from 0 to 5 contributing a maximum of five points to the final score.

Therefore, studies could score a maximum of 31 points for assessing risk of bias of individual studies.⁸⁶